

Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), Senator Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), and Congressman Peter Welch (D-Vt.) announced on Tuesday that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is releasing \$17.69 million in home heating assistance funding to Vermont. The congressional delegation has been calling for the release of these funds and the continued support of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

This funding is part of a nationwide release of \$3.1 billion in LIHEAP funds to help struggling families heat their homes and represents 90 percent of the block grant funding approved for LIHEAP under the Continuing Appropriations Act of 2013. The remaining 10 percent is being held in reserve until later in the heating season.

Senator Leahy said, “Winter is already upon many Vermont families and heating fuel is not a luxury, it is a necessity. Funding from the LIHEAP program helps many Vermonters get through long months of harshly cold days and nights. Without the assistance from this program, the winter would present a major threat to the health and lives of many of our friends and neighbors. I will continue to demand additional support for the LIHEAP program to ensure that all Vermonters in need are able to heat their homes this winter.”

Senator Sanders said, “While it is good news that the administration is releasing LIHEAP funds to help keep people warm this winter, it is wrong that this funding has been cut by more than \$1.6 billion since Fiscal Year 2010. In Vermont, the fuel assistance program is a lifeline to dignity for tens of thousands of senior citizens living on fixed incomes, families with young children, and persons with disabilities. I will continue to fight as hard as I can to fully fund LIHEAP.”

Congressman Welch said, “Energy assistance is a vital lifeline for many Vermonters, so this is very good news that comes just in time for the cold weather now settling in. But this is just a down payment on what Vermont will need to meet the demand this winter. We’ll continue fighting to ensure LIHEAP is fully funded and available for those who need it when they need it.”

Vermonters seeking home heating assistance may visit the website of the Department of Children and Families at [http://dcf.vermont.gov/esd/fuel\\_assistance](http://dcf.vermont.gov/esd/fuel_assistance) .

